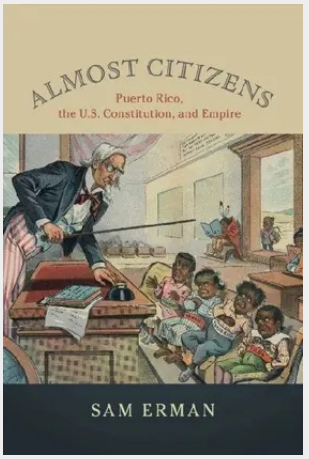
Erman

Almost Citizens

Almost Citizens lays out the tragic story of how the United States denied Puerto Ricans full citizenship following annexation of the island in 1898. As America became an overseas empire, a handful of remarkable Puerto Ricans debated with US legislators, presidents, judges, and others over who was a citizen and what citizenship meant. This struggle caused a fundamental shift in constitution law: away from the post-Civil War regime of citizenship, rights, and statehood, and toward doctrines that accommodated racist imperial governance. Erman's gripping account shows how, in the wake of the Spanish-American War, administrators, lawmakers, and presidents together with judges deployed creativity and ambiguity to transform constitutional meaning for a quarter of a century. The result is a history in which the United States and Latin America, Reconstruction and empire, and law and bureaucracy intertwine.



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